



COURAGE: It's Your Choice

FACILITATOR GUIDE





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PURPOSE

The purpose of this Facilitator Guide is to help you conduct a meaningful discussion among young people who have viewed the short video, “Courage: It’s Your Choice.” This DVD was produced specifically for the youth of Southern Africa, to engage them in discussions regarding sexual attitudes and behaviours, and the dangers of HIV/AIDS.

It is important that these discussions be facilitated by a person of credibility and authority, and one who understands and adheres to the three essential strategies the DVD lays out to eliminate the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. Those strategies are:

- 1) commit to wait until marriage before becoming sexually active;
- 2) in marriage, have only one sexual partner; and
- 3) youth make the case with one another for the above two strategies.

TIPS ON FACILITATING A DISCUSSION

- Facilitate the discussion with youth, using the Courage: It’s Your Choice Discussion Guide, immediately following viewing of the 8-minute DVD.
- Understand that your role is one of oversight and direction. Communicate to the youth that you don’t have all of the answers and that you’re not there to tell them what is right or wrong or what to do. Minimize the amount of time you talk and encourage youth to take the lead. Be transparent, allowing the youth to see how you feel and how you care about them. Summarize their discussions as needed in order to reinforce positive points.



- In preparation for your facilitation, review the diagram on the back of this Facilitator Guide to familiarize yourself with the major influences that determine how young Southern Africans think and act sexually. Your familiarization with these determining factors will help you guide the discussion and to gently correct misunderstandings and cultural ramifications.
- Seek to engage every youth in the discussion. Help each person feel heard, being very careful not to call undue attention to anyone or make anyone feel uncomfortable in front of peers. As you know, talking about such matters can be difficult for young people, and in some communities there is a stigma about doing so. Approach this subject matter-of-factly, as an everyday part of life. Remain calm and relaxed so that they will, as well. (You may find it productive to lead separate discussions for boy and girls.)
- At the beginning of the discussion let students know how long this will take. Keep discussions to no more than 30-45 minutes in order to maintain interest and a lively dialogue. You may wish to have a second or third discussion to cover all of the questions in the Discussion Guide.
- If students seem interested in pursuing further discussion, consider showing the 30-minute testimony of Angie Diale, also found on the DVD, in which she speaks openly about the hardships of her life living with HIV. It is powerful and will support students' previous discussions quite well.



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- Be prepared at the end of the discussion to offer youth a constructive way in which to further their discussions and build on any commitments made during your time with them. You may want to consider forming a club or offering additional after-school activities for this purpose.

RATIONALE FOR QUESTIONS

Each of the ten groups of questions have been carefully selected to draw youth out and to help them consider the implications of their behaviours and/or other more positive behaviours. A few notes about each section of questions follow:

It's Your Life

The first three questions are “ice breakers,” meant to get students talking and to become comfortable with one another and the discussion setting. Students should be asked to respond quickly to each question, rapidly answering without having been called upon. You can describe the process to them as “popcorn,” as if their answers are the corn popping as it heats up. Hopefully, their discussion will do likewise!

Peer Pressure

Peer pressure is probably the strongest determinant among young people of sexual behaviours. And, it represents one of their greatest fears and greatest source of confusion. They simply do not know how to combat the pressure and oftentimes succumb to behaviours that they preferred to avoid.



HIV/AIDS

Obviously, youth are familiar with HIV and AIDS. There are, however, many, many dangerous misunderstandings that you can help correct with gentle intervention.

Reducing Risk vs. Eliminating Risk

Youth have been bombarded with messages of how to *reduce* their risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, but they are less certain of strategies to *eliminate* risk. It is critical that youth understand that condoms, at best, will only reduce their risk. Be prepared to help them see the life-saving, future-giving, alternatives of adhering to strategies to eliminate risk: waiting until marriage for sex and having only one partner in marriage.

Relationships

Developing and maintaining relationships is difficult for all young people. You, no doubt, remember pain in your early important relationships. Be especially gentle during this part of the discussion, showing by what you say and how you say it that you understand their trials and tribulations. Keep in mind, however, that another determinant of sexual attitudes and behaviours is loose inappropriate definitions of words such as “love.” Youth will say that if they love someone, they must have sex with that person. Help them better understand the real meaning of love, differentiating love from desire.



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The Maker

SAHAC, the Southern Africa HIV/AIDS Collaboration, is a Christian organization founded on the love of God expressed through His Son, Jesus Christ. We believe that it is by His power alone that attitudes, behaviours, and cultures will ultimately be changed and bring an end to the devastation of HIV/AIDS.

Commitment

Questions 20, 21, and 22 are meant to help youth see and understand the need to be courageous in making commitments and in giving others permission to hold them accountable.

Be a Courageous Leader

This part of the discussion is meant to surface potential youth leaders willing to step forward and be examples for their peers. SAHAC is developing training opportunities for such youth. Be sure to note the names of those that stand out to you.

Who to Talk With

It is difficult for young people to find someone they can trust enough to really talk to. Again, be sensitive during this part of the discussion, encouraging students to discover someone with whom they can share deeply.

Today's Discussion

Well, you made it, you reached the end of the discussion, but don't end quite yet. All of this discussion has been focused to the climax of question 29. Be sure to



give youth a final few moments to quietly reflect on their time today and to write down and sign a commitment. Be careful to draw no unnecessary attention to either those that do or those that don't write down a commitment. Encourage youth to keep their Discussion Guide. Do not collect them.

NEED SOME HELP?

Contact Angie Diale, SAHAC's Director of Youth Empowerment, for any help you may need, or to learn more about SAHAC at:

+27 (0)83 739.768 or angie.diale@wbs.co.za.

THANK YOU!

Hopefully, your experience in guiding a discussion will be a positive one. It should be, for you will be doing a great service to your youth. You will give them a chance, one they may never have had before, to stop and think and talk about growing into sexual maturity, a most important part of each person's life. It is a fact that each of us develops our convictions – our most firmly held beliefs – not by thinking or writing in our diaries, or even by reading, but instead by talking with others. Thank you for helping your youth talk with one another and develop their convictions – convictions that will change, perhaps even save, their lives!

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Factors Determining Sexual Attitudes and Behaviour of Pre-Teens and Teens

